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THE RISE OF AMERICAN CITIES.

OF late years there have been many able discussions\* of the problems of city government in the United States.\* Most of these discussions, however, have turned upon the forms of municipal governments and the dangers discernible in their workings: the existence and growth of cities have been assumed as a matter of course. Nevertheless, the fact that we have so many cities to govern is one of the most astonishing in history. Less than a hundred

\* Of these may be instanced: Von Holst's *Constitutional Law*, § 102; Bryce's *American Commonwealth*, chaps. 1.-lii.; Woodrow Wilson's *The State*, §§ 1030-1037; *Publications of the American Economic Association*, vol. i., Nos. 2, 3, vol. ii., No. 6; *Johns Hopkins University Studies*, vol. iv., Nos. 4, 10, vol. v., Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, vol. vii., Nos. 1, 3, 4; *Publications of the American Statistical Association*, New Series, Nos. 2, 3, 6; W. M. Ivins in the *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. ii. pp. 291-312; Seth Low and James Parton in the *Forum*, vol. ii. pp. 260, 539; A. R. Spofford's *The City of Washington and the Growth of Cities in the United States*; Simon Sterne in Lalor's *Cyclopædia of Political Science*, vol. i. pp. 460-468; E. L. Godkin in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. xvii. pp. 462-464; Ford's *American Citizen's Manual*, Part I., pp. 66-83; F. J. Parker's *Study of Municipal Government in Massachusetts*.

years ago, the whole population of the United States was under four millions, of whom hardly a hundred thousand lived in cities. There are now at least three hundred and fifty cities, with a total population of nearly sixteen millions. Since 1790, the population of the United States has increased sixteen times; while the cities have increased in number sixty times, and the urban population nearly a hundred and sixty times.

In the causes and development of this phenomenal growth may perhaps be found an explanation of some of the complicated problems of city government. This paper will therefore be devoted to three inquiries: 1. What causes have determined the sites and distribution of American cities? 2. What has been the growth of their population? 3. What is noticeable about the status and social condition of people in cities?

At the outset, what is meant by the term "city"? The English usage, by which no place is strictly a city which has not a cathedral and a bishop, is no longer applicable even in England. To use the term for every place having a so-called "city" charter would include many an unimportant Charles City or Falls City. In New England there are often several centres of population still united under the old town government, but the aggregate is not a city in name. For convenience, the definition of the Tenth Census will be adopted: a city is any aggregate of eight thousand or more persons living under one local government.

Before noticing the rate of growth of particular cities, it is desirable to consider what causes have planted and nourished our chief centres of population. The reasons which can be given for the site of most ancient and mediæval cities are here singularly inapplicable. An Athenian or Salzburger suddenly placed in our midst would declare that this strange people had deliberately avoided the most eligible sites, and had exposed themselves to

ruin. The intelligent Athenian or candid Salzburger must quickly see, however, that the conditions of life in the New World have been different. Our cities have grown up in a time of peace. Steam power, artificial roads, and the use of large craft have changed the character of manufactures and commerce. The political importance of cities has diminished, and their commercial importance has increased. Little as he might admire the external appearance of some of our cities, even Alexander or Wallenstein might share the admiration which Blücher expressed when taken through the streets of London after Waterloo: "Mein Gott, was für eine Stadt zum plündern!"

Most ancient or mediæval cities, as Jerusalem, Athens, and Rome, were grouped about a hill; or on an island, as were Paris, Rhodes, and Venice; or on a promontory, as Constantinople; or, if in flat land, they were not immediately on the coast, as London, Pisa, Cairo. The reason was a simple one: they felt themselves in danger of attack, and sought the most defensible situations. It is not too much to say that not one city in the United States owes its growth to its protected situation. Quebec stands like a lion on its rock; but there is not, and never has been, one first-class fortress or citadel within our present limits. So far is this the case that, of the ten larger cities in the United States, six, probably seven, are exposed to attack by sea and insufficiently protected.\* Military authorities assure us that a bombardment is by no means the serious affair that people suppose. Nevertheless, the prosperity of the coast cities may at any time receive a terrible blow, because other than military reasons have determined their site.

A second great reason for the location of cities applies as efficaciously now as at any former time: it is the con-

\* New York, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore, San Francisco, and New Orleans are exposed: only Chicago, St. Louis, and Cincinnati are safe.

venience of commerce. The sage observation that Providence has caused a large river to flow past every great city is as nearly true now as it was when Memphis, Babylon, and Cologne were built. As nature has determined the position of some cities by furnishing a bold and therefore a defensible site, so she has selected that of others by inequalities in the bed of streams. The site of many American cities is on a river at the head or foot of navigation, usually just above or below a fall. This is the case with Louisville and Buffalo. St. Paul marks the upper part of the Mississippi, as Troy marks the Hudson, and Duluth and Chicago the head-waters of the St. Lawrence. More often the large city grows up at the mouth of a river or near its mouth. This is the case with many of our lake cities, as Cleveland and Milwaukee; so St. Louis stands on the first high land below the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi; Baltimore owed its early growth to the Susquehanna trade; New Orleans and New York are famous examples.

The history of the world has shown that it is much less important for a city to have the length of a great river behind it than to have a good harbor before it. Newburyport at the mouth of the Merrimac, Saybrook at the mouth of the Connecticut, have long since fallen out of the race with Boston on the Charles, Philadelphia on the Schuylkill, and Providence on the Moshassuck. It is the harbor that counts most, and not the river navigation. The further up into the land a harbor penetrates, the more valuable it is. In America, as elsewhere in the world, the point where the tidal water of an estuary meets the fresh water of a river is marked by nature for the site of a settlement. Hence the foundation of the greatness of London, Hamburg, Bordeaux; hence the importance of Norfolk, Charleston, Baltimore, and Philadelphia. New York and San Francisco alone of our large cities lie at the mouth of an estuary.

The depth of harbors was for many years of less consequence than their accessibility and protection. From the little havens of the Cinque Ports issued the wasp's nest of vessels which protected the coast of England. From Duxbury, Falmouth, and Perth Amboy sailed the East Indiamen of a century ago. The increasing size and draft of sea-going steamers have caused a concentration of trade into the few large and deep harbors, and this is doubtless one cause of the disproportionate growth of the large cities in the United States. As the coast from Nova Scotia to New Jersey contains the best harbors in the North Atlantic Ocean, the cities of that region have a natural advantage over their Southern rivals. On the other hand, the ports from New York to Norfolk, and the lake ports, have an advantage in their nearness to supplies of coal; and the advantage increases as steamers take the place of sailing vessels.

Sixty years ago, New England seemed likely to lose her commercial importance, because the mountains cut her off from direct communication with the West. It is not enough for a place to have a harbor and good communication with foreign countries in order to grow into a city. It must also have direct and easy connection with a rich country in the interior. Verona, though an interior city, has for ages lain at the mouth of the easiest Alpine pass. Trieste is the port for Southern Germany. For the same reason, Baltimore, Charleston, and Philadelphia, Chicago and St. Paul, have had a better opportunity for growth than Boston.

New York, in spite of her magnificent harbor, suffered from a mistake of the geologic forces. A glance at the map shows that the great lakes were meant to drain into the Hudson; and their waters still protest, as they thunder down Niagara, against an unnatural diversion to an estuary frozen one-half the year. To remedy the mistake of nature, the State of New York constructed the Erie

Canal, finished in 1825; and the astonishing growth of the city is the fruit of that undertaking. Philadelphia, Washington, and Richmond vainly tried to imitate this triumph. But Baltimore, by the early construction of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, rivalled it.

The effect of our railroad system has been to make available the best harbors, wherever found, and to make large areas of rich country tributary to the cities upon them. Boston could scarcely live from New England products alone. New York depends for daily bread on Ohio, Michigan, and Minnesota. Of the six largest cities in the country, five are the larger Atlantic ports,—Boston, New York, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Baltimore; and they are among the most distant from the centre of food supply. The other city of the six, Chicago, illustrates another great change in modern, as compared with ancient, commercial conditions. Chicago is a great trade centre. Its site was determined by the fact that a little creek made the most convenient harbor at the head of Lake Michigan. Railroads diverged from it, railroads were built to it. It has become a distributing point for the States to the west of it. St. Paul and Minneapolis in the North-west, St. Louis and Kansas City in the South-west, owe their growth to the same cause. Their site was determined by their position on rivers, but the river trade is now infinitesimal.\* Their growth is due to a network of railroads.

In the series of commercial reasons just discussed for the growth of cities, there is evident a tendency to concentrate trade. The few places which combine good harbors or a central situation with lake or river navigation, with established trade routes, with artificial means of transit, and with cheap coal, must more and more gather to themselves foreign and internal commerce. It is for

\*Except, of course, the trade down the river from St. Louis to New Orleans. Even this route is now paralleled by a railroad.

these reasons that New York is and must always be the chief city in the western hemisphere.

The coast cities, however, owe only a part of their prosperity to their situation as points of exchange for foreign products. We sometimes lose sight of the fact that all our greater commercial cities are also great manufacturing cities. The first nine cities in population are the first nine in value of manufactured products. New York leads in manufactures of clothing. Philadelphia is second only to Lynn in shoes, and surpasses Lawrence in mixed textile goods. It is not merely that these cities manufacture more because they have more people: they have more people because they manufacture to advantage.

When manufacturing began on a large scale in the United States, certain inland cities grew up, because they had an advantageous water-power. Rochester and Minneapolis, and especially the towns on the Connecticut and Merrimac, owe their prosperity to the shrewdness of men who caused water to fall in an orderly manner through their overshot and turbine wheels rather than tumultuously over rocks. It is a very singular fact that the advantage of water-power sites is at present almost nothing. A high official in the Amoskeag Corporation — said to be the largest concern engaged in textile manufacturing in the world — has said that, if Manchester, New Hampshire, the seat of the works, were not already built, it would not be built for the sake of utilizing that important water-power. There are many magnificent mill-sites in the North Carolina mountains still unused and likely to be unused for many years. Where coal is cheap, steam-power is, on the whole, more convenient. Hence the growth of Fall River, New Bedford, and Providence; hence, also, the possibility of manufacturing in the large coast and inland cities, in competition with the water-powers. We all recognize that Pittsburg owes its prosperity to the soft coal near by. We less often reflect that



Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York enjoy a similar advantage over the New England cities.

The success of manufactures and the consequent distribution of population into manufacturing cities depends, perhaps, less on the natural advantages of a place than on the skill and industry of the people. The great ease of transporting persons over large distances — an absolutely new thing in the history of the world — makes it possible to mass skilled laborers in cities. The coast cities enjoy the advantage of receiving such laborers direct from abroad, and thus in many cases they have the first choice. There is a corresponding disadvantage. Almost all the immigrants into the United States land at one of four ports,— Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore; and these cities fail to sift into the country beyond some elements which cause them great perplexity.

For the prosperity of the country it is far less important that population should grow than that it should grow intelligent. In this respect, the coast cities have some advantage. The people of great seaports have always the inestimable stimulus of direct intercourse with the world abroad and at home. Hence the population of New York is more likely to absorb new ideas than the population of Lowell or Cincinnati. In manufacturing cities, small and great, social and political problems are more difficult. Here it is possible to employ the labor of women and children. The taxes are more likely to fall upon the large corporations, and to be spent by men who have no property. The manufacturing cities, even the smaller ones, are more closely peopled than those whose greater interest is commerce.

A distinct class of cities, numerous and populous, has grown up in the last thirty years, away from the coast and from water-powers, but around mines of coal and metals, or near deposits of petroleum. Pittsburg and its neighbor Allegheny are the most important. Places like Al-

toona, Cumberland, Scranton, and Wheeling are rapidly following them. Wherever there is coal, manufactures spring up, and populous cities. Around other mines have grown sometimes strange and phenomenal places. Pit-hole, Pennsylvania, once a ragged, unpromising hill farm, became a city of thirty thousand people; and a few years later its handsome brick hotels and banks were inhabited by two people, and its railroad was torn up. A similar fate seems likely to overtake Virginia City, Nevada, and may possibly overtake Leadville.

In addition to the geographical reasons which have just been enumerated, there are certain other physical causes which assist the aggregation of people in a particular spot. That place which lies near a good water supply has a better chance of growth. A city which is easily drained ought to be more healthy; and a city which has a beautiful site, well improved, and a system of parks, attracts people of leisure. These causes have a smaller influence than they deserve. Philadelphia has now more than a million of people whose chief drink is Schuylkill water, and a part of whom grow up in spite of surface drainage. On the other hand, cities with fewer natural advantages cheerfully spend large sums on aqueducts or systems for pumping sewage. The less fortunately situated cities have often the best water and the best pleasure grounds. It is almost inconceivable that, of all the wealthy cities on the Atlantic coast, not one has a water-front park of any size. The growth of the population has been unexpected to itself; and the inestimable privilege of a beautiful sea-front has forever passed away. With the exception of Washington, Chicago, and Boston, I know of no city which is now making adequate provision for parks for the next generation.\*

One of the causes which had most effect upon the

\* On this subject there is an interesting monograph by E. R. L. Gould, in the *Publications of the American Statistical Association*, New Series, Nos. 2, 3.

growth of ancient and mediæval cities has very little operation in the United States. Corinth, Perugia, Augsburg, were little independent States. Syracuse, Florence, or Nuremberg could, on occasion, put an army of fifty thousand men into the field. The city was the unit of political life. Cities grew because the people were freer there than in the country. No such tendency has ever shown itself in America. Beyond a few angry suggestions, during the Civil War, that New York city be created into a separate State, there has been no attempt to make a city a commonwealth. No one moves from Boston to Philadelphia to escape a tyrant's rule. No County Democrat is exiled because Tammany has the upper hand. The cities are subordinated to the States. It is hard to see how it could be otherwise; but that dependence upon the State has brought a danger into our municipal system. The well-meaning people of the cities have come to look to the State government as a *deus ex machina*; they expect more from a change of charter than from a change of heart. I am strongly of opinion that, if the people of New York City were left to themselves, and could get no relief from Albany, they would have to-day a better, cleaner, and more economical government, and that the much more satisfactory government of Boston would be improved if the responsibility for it were thrown wholly upon the Bostonians.

When a city is once started, it is likely to grow from the mere force of gravitation. It is more than a figure of speech to use the terms which suggest the superior attractiveness of city life. What else is "politics" than what the people of the *πόλις* do? What is the "urbane" man but the dweller in the *urbs*, and the "pagan" but the unconverted dweller in the fields? Nor is it the higher and more intelligent class which is most attracted by city life. Where one person is drawn to a city by schools, churches, concerts, libraries, and theatres, five are drawn by the ex-

citement and stir and activity of a city. One of the greatest problems of modern times is how to get people out of the exhausting or despairing life of cities into the quiet and comfort of villages. And while the country life of Newport, Lenox, and Manchester-by-the-Sea, attracts a certain class for a season, annually more extended, an increasing number of well-to-do people leave the smaller towns in which they are first in wealth and influence, to engage in a doubtful struggle for recognition by people of greater wealth and social power in the great cities. One city in the Union, the most beautiful of all, and the capital of the nation, owes its growth in considerable part to its attractiveness for people who can live anywhere they like.

The importance and the beauty of Washington, however, are chiefly due to another cause of growth, the last here to be discussed. It is distinctly an artificial city, a creation rather than a growth. There have been times when the will of a despot has caused the walls of a new city to rise. Alexander built almost as many cities as he destroyed. The will of the sovereign people has also established cities, and of these Washington is the principal one. Some city was likely to grow up on the lower Potomac, but that it should be Washington rather than Alexandria is due only to the combination of political forces which determined the site of the national capital,—the assumption question, the arrival of the North Carolina members, and the compromise arranged between the astute Hamilton and the too confiding Jefferson. Several considerable cities have been built up in like manner by votes of State legislatures or conventions. Harrisburg would be no more important than Lancaster but for the Pennsylvania capital. Columbus, Ohio, has few natural advantages. Jefferson City, Missouri, would be a hamlet if the legislature had never met there. The smaller centres are powerfully affected by such political distinctions.

A few months ago, the people of a Kansas county were seen with arms in their hands settling the location of the county seat, or bodily moving houses from one would-be city to another.

The site of Indianapolis was fixed near the centre of gravity of Indiana; but its growth is due to another artificial cause, peculiar to new countries like America. It is the centre of a great system of radiating railroads; and it has grown, while Cairo, at the confluence of the Ohio and the Mississippi, has decayed. To create a city by converging railroads upon a spot in the wilderness is not always possible; but, when such a centre is formed, it draws population to itself. There was a time when the established towns objected to the noise and bustle of railroads, and compelled them to avoid their limits. Thus the Boston & Lowell Railroad was obliged to steer between old towns like Woburn and Wilmington. Now towns strive, compete, and tax themselves to bring a railroad; and Woburn and Wilmington are glad to have even branch connections. The location of the first repair and construction shops makes the nucleus of a town or an addition to an existing town. A positive and even whimsical influence has been exerted by railroads in their choice of termini. But in the long run the railroads must go to the cities, and not the cities to the railroads. Racine and Superior City and Dunkirk are discouraging examples to the company which proposes to create a city by ending there.\*

The effect of railroads upon the older cities, possessed already of inalienable advantages, has been more striking than in the creation of new cities. When the Alleghanies were pierced, the Western commerce poured down into the

\*An interesting example of the power of a railroad over urban growth was shown a few years ago in the building of the Yellowstone branch of the Northern Pacific. An enterprising man had secured the quarter section at the bottom of the valley where the road must end. Failing to make terms with him, the company took up the upper end of its track, and established its terminus two miles farther down.

termini of the railroads. The keen eye of Calhoun early saw that the ship must come to meet the car, and he earnestly advocated a great railroad from Charleston north-westward. But Baltimore, and a little later Philadelphia, had Western lines years before Charleston or Mobile or Savannah or Norfolk or Richmond, and even before New York, Boston, Portland, and Montreal. The passes now occupied by the New York Central, Pennsylvania, Baltimore & Ohio, and Chesapeake & Ohio Railroads, are as much trade routes as the Suez Canal or the Bosphorus. No rival roads can compete on equal terms, and no neighboring cities can outstrip the termini of these great trunk lines.

Another form of artificial stimulus to city building has had little influence in the United States. A colonized and colonizing country, no cities have been built up by distinct, elaborate schemes of colonization. Settlements like Marietta have not grown to the dignity of cities. Settlements like Rugby have failed for want of adaptation to the circumstances.

The principles upon which the growth of cities depends, as described in this paper, may perhaps be seen more clearly by applying them to a few specific cases. New York was first settled because it was an island,—a state of things which the people have since attempted, at great cost, to remedy. It is susceptible of defence against modern forms of attack, though at present its defences are little more substantial than that fear of torpedoes and rumor of a novel steam-craft which kept the British out in 1814. It has the best deep harbor on the Atlantic coast, easy of access for the largest vessels in the world. It is the Mecca of most imports. It lies at the end of a magnificent chain of internal navigation, reaching to Chicago and Duluth, and is the centre of some of the greatest railroad systems in the world. Further, it is the recognized financial centre of the United States.

Commercially, therefore, it has no rival in the United States, and can never have any till the hills sink down behind Boston and Philadelphia, as they do in the Mohawk Valley. The nearness of coal, and the abundant supply of labor of all kinds, give it a great advantage as a manufacturing city. New York, with its adjuncts, Brooklyn, Jersey City, and other near cities, has nearly three million people, and is already the second centre of population in the world. It has few artificial advantages. It is not the capital of the State or nation. It is divided by arms of the sea from two of its three systems of railroads. It does not attract people by the character of its government. It is the largest city because it has the largest opportunity.

Boston, despite its great natural advantages, is a great city, chiefly because of the character of its leading men. Like New York, it is defended from foreign enemies only by a sense of what is proper among gentlemen. The harbor is a fine one, though not easy to enter for large vessels. Its eminence depends less on the Western business than on the fact that it is the supply point for considerable parts of New England. Indeed, it is the intimate connection with the business of all New England which makes Boston so important. As a manufacturing centre, it is first in nothing, and only third in curried leather and women's clothes. But it is the centre of administration for the New England mills, and every pound of goods manufactured pays its tribute. It gets its share of immigration from abroad, and more than its share of people from other communities in the United States. The natural beauty of the city is an attraction, greatly aided by the park and other improvements. More than any other city in America, it draws people to it by the excellence of its schools and libraries, and by the public spirit of its citizens.

Chicago is great both from natural and artificial causes. It is not exposed to foreign attack. The head, in that

direction, of the magnificent lake water-ways, it is practically the Western terminus of the Erie Canal, and the most important station on the great trade route from New York to the Pacific Coast and Eastern Asia. Still more important, and the foundation of the wealth of Chicago, is the great valley of the upper Mississippi, the most fertile large area now occupied by man. Special manufacturing advantages it does not possess, save that Ohio and Pennsylvania coal form a return cargo for its grain fleet. These commercial reasons completely compensate for the natural disadvantages of the place, and the tremendous energy and skill of the people of Chicago will soon make it and keep it the second city in the Union. It was this energy which early caused the railroads to stretch out like *antennæ* to the West, and which then foresaw the necessity of a like connection with the East. It is fortunate for the people of the city, and of other cities likely to imitate it, that this restless vigor is now hastening to beautify a city of which the site has few natural advantages. Handsome houses, beautiful parks, imposing public buildings, great libraries,—in these Chicago bids fair to surpass most of her older rivals.

The second series of questions to be examined in this paper concerns the numbers of the people in American cities.\*

The total number of “cities” within the census definition—an aggregation of eight thousand or more persons

\*On this subject, the most valuable source is, of course, the Census Publications. Mr. E. C. Lunt, in the *Key to the Publications of the United States Census, 1790-1880*, published in 1888 by the American Statistical Association, has prepared a valuable comparative index to the forty odd volumes and to much other statistical literature. For the purposes of this paper, four volumes of the Tenth Census (1880) are especially useful. They are: Vol. I., on Population; Vol. II., on Manufactures; and Vols. XVII. and XVIII., on Social Statistics of Cities. A part of the tables are reproduced in the briefer *Compendium of the Tenth Census*. Some of the material is restated in Scribner's *Statistical Atlas*, with illustrative charts (New York, 1885).

Massachusetts and New York have, at the middle of each decade, quin-



living under one local government—is shown in the Appendix. The increase has been much more irregular than that of the total population of the country. From 1790 to 1840, the increase was comparatively slow. In the next decade, 1840–50, as many cities were added as in the previous half-century. The explanation is to be found in two facts,—the development of the first system of Eastern and trans-Appalachian railroads, and the beginning of immigration on a large scale.\* The same causes increased the cities during the decade 1850–60 from 85 to 141. The Civil War rather stimulated than retarded the growth of cities of all sizes, and raised the total number by 85. A steadier growth of 60 in the years 1870–80 made the total of 286.

In the same table (Appendix, I.) is found a classification of cities by size. Nearly two-thirds (186) may be classed as small cities, having less than 20,000 people. The cities of medium population, from 20,000 to 40,000, make up about one-fifth of the whole number. In this proportion there has been for some decades a gain. The large cities, having more than 40,000 people, were 45 in number in 1880, and have been for some decades pretty steadily a sixth of the total number.

The change in proportions has brought about a corresponding change in the average size of our cities.† In 1800, it was 35,000. In 1850, it had fallen to less than

quennial censuses of great value. The New York census of 1885 was omitted, owing to a political disagreement.

The *World Almanac* contains an excellent estimate of the present population of the great cities.

For cities outside the United States, the most convenient summaries are found in Mulhall's *Dictionary of Statistics*.

In the Appendix to the *Annual Report* of Mr. W. E. Foster to the Trustees of the Providence Public Library for 1888 are valuable tables on the present population, wealth, and valuation of cities.

\* The railroad mileage was, in 1830, 23 miles; in 1840, 818; in 1850, 9,021. Immigration rose from 23,322 in 1830 to 310,004 in 1850.

† See Appendix, Table II.

32,000. In 1880, it was 39,500. Or, to state it in other terms, the medium and large cities attract more than their share of the total growth of city population. In the Eastern and Middle States, the formation of centres of population is about completed. Henceforth population will grow about them rather than form new nuclei.

The 286 cities in 1880 are, of course, to be found most abundantly in the most populous parts of the country,—New England, the middle coast States, the region just south of the Great Lakes. But the distribution of cities is far from being the same as that of the population. New England, with less than one-twelfth of the total population of the country, has nearly one-fourth of the cities and quite one-seventh of the urban population. New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, taken together, contain one-fifth of the people of the United States, about one-fourth of the cities, and two-fifths of the urban population. The six coast States from Virginia to Florida contain one-eighth of the population, one-sixteenth of the cities, and one-thirtieth of the urban population. In 1880, as many people lived in Boston alone as in all the cities of those six States. A still more striking contrast exists between New Jersey and Mississippi. The States had almost exactly the same population (1,100,000). Of these there lived in New Jersey cities 500,000; in Mississippi cities, 11,814.

Not only do the large cities gain on the smaller, but the cities, as a whole, gain fast on the population outside of the cities.\* In 1790, the city population was but one-thirtieth of the total. In 1860, it was 5,000,000 out of 31,000,000, or nearly one-sixth. In 1880, it was nearly a fourth. This is a most significant and fundamental fact; for it means a gradual change of the basis on which our institutions rest. The republic was founded for a country largely agricultural, with a diffused population,

\* See Appendix, Table II.

having means of easy subsistence. I believe that it will soon need to stand, and will stand, for a population of which one-half lives in towns of 4,000 inhabitants or upwards. The present proportion of one-fourth is by no means alarming. It is, to be sure, more than that of Italy, or France,\* and is not much under that of densely populated Belgium or Holland. But it is rather less than that of Australia, where the conditions are very similar, and not half that of England. Improved methods of agriculture, systematized transportation and distribution, make it possible to feed and to keep contented masses of population which would have broken down any mediæval government.

Next in importance to the question of the total population in cities is the question of the comparative growth of great cities. Here, as in the former case, may be clearly seen the effect of the development of water-ways from 1820, and of railroads from about 1830. Up to 1820, Philadelphia was the first city in the Union; and in that year it was found to be the first American city having a population of more than 100,000,—a distinction shared with nineteen others in 1880, and with at least twenty-five to-day. The Erie Canal was finished in 1825: the effect is seen in the rapid leap of New York from 108,000 in 1820 to 209,000 in 1830. Thenceforward it has been the undisputed metropolis of the Union. By a careful estimate, based on the presidential votes of 1880 and 1888, New York has to-day not far from 1,600,000 people,† and in 1890 will have a population little short of two millions, or about that of all the New England and Middle States in 1790. Philadelphia has kept a steady upward course, and numbers now at least a million. But Philadelphia,

\* An elaborate comparison is made in Mulhall's *Dictionary of Statistics*, p. 36.

† This and succeeding statements are derived from estimates based on electoral votes, directories, and other material, collected in Appendix, Table III.

unlike New York, has greatly extended her limits of late years, and thus has swept in adjacent centres of population.

Brooklyn is a phenomenon among the world's cities. Lined with wharves, it can hardly be called a commercial city; abounding in factories, it is not eminent for manufactures. Its independent life is dwarfed by that of its great neighbor; and the social and political activity of this city of 782,000 people is decidedly less than that of its nearest rival, Chicago. The table shows clearly the rocket-like growth of this latter American wonder. In 1820, Chicago had no population worth considering; in 1840, it timidly appears in the census with 5,000. Lake navigation, the stimulus of Eastern and Western railroads, the Civil War, the control of the trade of the great North-west, have brought Chicago up to the fourth rank of American cities, and it is likely eventually to take the second place.

The next two cities have been close rivals in population for a hundred years. Baltimore and Boston have been much alike in situation, in relation to the country back of them, and in enterprise. Boston had 18,000 to Baltimore's 13,000 in 1790. From 1800 to 1870, Baltimore drew ahead. In 1880, notwithstanding the fire of 1872, Boston had taken a leap. In the last eight years Baltimore has gained immensely, and now leads Boston by 75,000.\*

It is now to be expected that St. Louis also will surpass Boston in numbers. The growth of that city has been retarded by the slower development of the South-west as compared with the North-west, and by the decline of the Missouri navigation and the decay of the Mississippi trade. New Orleans has suffered from the same cause.

Besides the cities mentioned, there are three centres

\* Annexations of territory, first by Boston, then by Baltimore, have complicated the question.

likely henceforth to be of very great importance. San Francisco enjoys the only really good harbor between Puget Sound and the Straits of Magellan. Were the fertile country back of it as broad as that back of New York, it would rival the metropolis. It must certainly become one of the world's great cities. Kansas City has advanced from 32,000 in 1870 and 56,000 in 1880 to a claim of 185,000 in 1888. By its direct connections eastward, it is drawing business which would otherwise go to St. Louis, and is becoming an intermediary of the South-western trade. The same state of things exists in the North-west. St. Paul and Minneapolis together had 33,000 in 1870 and 58,000 in 1880. They have now a population of nearly 300,000, and confident claims of 442,000. They have thrust themselves between Chicago and the far North-west, and are likely to form one of our greatest cities. They, too, have secured direct Eastern roads; but, as these roads pass through Canada, the rapid growth of the dual city is leading to serious complications of international trade. A growth such as these cities show is without parallel in the history of the world. The same influences, of railroads and of vast movements of commerce, have been at work abroad. London, Berlin, Paris, have gained enormously; but Paris, which may have at present a population of 2,500,000, had 550,000 in 1800, and nearly 2,000,000 in 1870.\*

In this eager current of growing population there are some eddies. Even in America, some considerable cities are stationary or moving backward. This has been the case with some of the smaller New England seaports, and would have been the case with all, but for the sagacity of the New England men who turned into manufactures the profits of the India trade and of whaling. In 1870, Newburyport had 11,000 to Brockton's 8,000; in 1880, Brockton had gained 5,000, and Newburyport but 1,000. Mil-

\* *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 9th edition, vol. xviii. p. 277.

ford, Mass., fell off from 9,900 to 9,300. Oswego, N.Y., gained by 200, and Poughkeepsie by 100, on 20,000.

That the tremendous growth of our cities, particularly of the greater ones, is very unfavorable for municipal government, hardly needs assertion. The increase of numbers means that the people and the city government never keep pace with their own necessities. Cities outgrow their charters, as boys outgrow suits of clothes. The digestive organs of the civil body are constantly overtaxed; comprehensive schemes of improvement become too small. New-comers never feel the same pride, the same sense of ownership and responsibility; and the influx of strangers hastens that crowding of experienced men out of public life, which is one of our most disagreeable public ills. But the problem must be met. The good citizen of Boston must make plans for a population of a million, and for a growth of municipal skill sufficient to control that number. New York must maintain a popular government able economically to care for four millions. The danger to free institutions keeps pace with the growth of the population of great cities.

It is a noteworthy fact that in Oswego the foreign-born population in 1880 was less by 1,500 than in 1870. This fact points to the third part of our inquiry, the derivation of city population. There are three sources from which our cities are fed: first, from their own natural increase; second, from an influx of native Americans from outside; third, from an influx of foreigners. A fourth element, which needs to be taken into account in some cities, is the colored population, which corresponds in many respects to the foreign element.

The proportion of foreigners to the total population of the country was in 1880 about 13 per cent.; but the proportion in cities and towns of 4,000 and upward was no less than 27 per cent. In other words, the cities and towns, which have but a fourth of the population, have

more than half the foreigners. The proportion is even more startling as we compare groups of cities. The general proportion of 27 per cent. holds good for the medium cities of 75,000 to 200,000, taken together; while the smaller cities, from 75,000 to 40,000, average only 24 per cent. This is made up by the fact that the large cities of 200,000 and upward attract a number relatively so much larger that 32 per cent. of their population is foreign born.

The case is even worse with certain individual cities. Boston had 30 per cent. in 1880, 34 per cent. in 1885. New York in 1880 had 40 per cent., a proportion since somewhat increased. In some of the New England factory towns, the foreigners were as many as 48 per cent. In Holyoke and Fall River, they had increased to 50 per cent. in 1885, and are probably increasing. Chicago is popularly supposed now to be more than half foreign, but no figures can be given.

The absolute numbers of foreigners in cities vary in ratios widely different from their total population. Thus in 1880 Atlanta and Lynn had almost the same population. In Atlanta there were 1,416 foreigners, in Lynn 7,040. The foreign population of Toledo and Washington was about the same, but the latter city had thrice the people of Toledo. Fall River, Paterson, and Troy were notable for large numbers of foreigners. The great interior cities, Milwaukee, Detroit, Cleveland, Buffalo, had within their borders each from 40,000 to 60,000 foreigners. San Francisco had 104,000, a startling proportion of 45 per cent. to the whole. But these numbers are insignificant beside the 177,000 of Brooklyn, the 204,000 each of Chicago and Philadelphia, and the vast multitude of 478,670 in the city of New York.

If we go a little farther into the details of nativity,\* some curious facts appear as to the preferences of different

\* See Appendix, Table V.

peoples for particular cities or kinds of cities. The Orient sends 23,000 to San Francisco, but only 5,000 to the fifty other cities of greatest population. The Scandinavians show no preference for the great cities: they are no more common there than elsewhere in the country. 380,000 Germans dwell in the ten largest cities, and make up 8 per cent. of their population. This is about twice their average throughout the country. Boston is least beloved by them; New York, Chicago, St. Louis, and Cincinnati, most. A third of all the French in the United States may be found in the ten great cities, which have but a tenth of the total population. Of the 1,800,000 Irish, no less than 600,000 inhabit the same ten cities; and 230,000 more dwell in the next forty cities. Nearly half the number of this race have therefore chosen cities of more than 40,000 people. Within the ten cities, one person in eight is Irish; outside them, one person in thirty-six. The natives of Great Britain are as frequent outside the cities as in them. Of the 710,000 British Americans in the country, few are found in large cities, but a much greater number in the smaller manufacturing places, where the French Canadians congregate. The Hungarians, Bohemians, Poles, and Italians were few in number as late as 1880. Since that time there has been a great immigration of all these races. In Boston, New York, and especially in Cleveland, Detroit, and Chicago, colonies are to be found in which few persons understand English.

It is evident from the above analysis that the large cities, which most need efficient government, are precisely those which receive an undue proportion of immigrants; and they are, moreover, most attractive to those immigrants who are least accustomed to self-government and least amenable to mild restraint.

That ignorant immigrants are not the only hindrances to good city government is shown conclusively by the case of Southern cities. New Orleans, though a seaport



of large trade, has but 20 per cent. of foreigners. Baltimore, by far the largest and most energetic of Southern cities, has but 17 per cent. In all these cities, the colored element takes the place of the foreign. The native white population of Baltimore is about the same as in Boston,—a little over two-thirds of the whole,—while that of Philadelphia is nearly three-fourths. In a few of the smaller Southern cities, the blacks actually outnumber the whites. This is the case with Selma and Montgomery, Alabama; with Wilmington, North Carolina, where the black population makes up about 60 per cent., and notably with Charleston, where it is about 54 per cent. For reasons better understood in the South than in the North, the negro vote seems to cause little difficulty in municipal elections.

The proportions of foreign and of colored elements have been much studied. Less attention has been paid to the very important question, How many dwellers in cities were born in other parts of the United States? For a definite answer to that inquiry, figures are not attainable. But the Census shows how many people in each of the greater cities were born in another State than that in which the city is situated. As people born in a city who afterwards reside elsewhere to some extent offset those born within the same State, who afterwards came into the city, these figures may be taken as representing approximately the drift of the native born towards the cities.\*

The great cities which have proved most attractive to people from other States are Chicago and Boston. While such American immigrants form but one-fifteenth of the population of New York and one-ninth of that of Philadelphia, they make one-fifth in Chicago. The case of Boston is even more striking. In 1880, 52,000, or one-seventh of the population, had been born in other States than Massachusetts. The census for Massachusetts for

\* See Appendix, Table IV.

1885 shows that about 40,000 people have come into that city from other parts of Massachusetts. The astonishing result is that of 362,000 people at that time in Boston only about 135,000 were born in the city itself; 90,000 were native Americans, elsewhere born; and 114,000 were foreign-born. The city most remarkable of all for this magnetic quality is Washington. Of the native whites living there in 1880, one-third were born outside the city.

The movement thus vaguely indicated is one of the three great elements in the rapid growth of the cities,—a rapid natural increase, due to easy conditions of life; a rapid immigration; and an influx from the surrounding country. But the first two of these causes harm only the cities themselves. If a city's children increase faster than its schools and workshops, the curse falls on the city. If immigrants outvote and control the native whites, the injury stops with the city limits. But the farmer's boy or the mill-hand who comes to the city brings force and energy, of which he deprives another part of the country. The cities draw not only the worst, but the most promising elements. The desertion of the New England hill farms is due chiefly to the better opportunities of the city. The nation gains, for the same persons have a larger field; but the process means that the political control of the farmers must some time fail, and that the people of the cities are eventually to be the great controlling force in the affairs of the nation.

From the statistics analyzed in the preceding paragraphs, it is evident that in no important American city is there any danger that the foreign will outnumber the native born element. Even in New York, the proportion has risen little above 40 per cent. Nevertheless, a closer examination will show conclusively that most of the great cities are now dominated by foreigners, and will be dominated by their descendants. In Boston, for example,

there were, in 1885, 275,000 American born persons to 132,000 foreign born. But of the natives 137,000 were minors; while of the foreigners only 12,000 were minors. The number of foreign born and native adults of voting age was almost exactly the same for each element. The children of the 120,000 foreigners are certain to be as numerous as those of the natives. Indeed, the 120,000 native born persons must include thousands of sons and daughters of foreign parents. The future of Boston, therefore, depends not upon the children of the Puritans, but upon the children of the stranger.

The excess of adults over the normal proportion in our cities is indeed startling. In the United States, as a whole, notwithstanding the large immigration of adults, the number of persons between the ages of 15 and 20 is still larger by a fourth than that of persons between the ages of 25 and 30.\* In Boston, however, the number of persons from 20 to 29 is greater by 18,000 than that of persons from 10 to 19.† We should know without statistics that this must be the effect of immigration. The statistics tell us of the thousands of recruits from the country and the many more thousands from abroad. At every age, adult foreigners in Boston are hardly less numerous than adult Americans; and from the ages of 40 to 60 they are more numerous. That government is not entirely in the hands of foreigners is due to the fact that they are of many nationalities, and cannot be brought into the same parties or political combinations. In New York, however, the domination is much more evident, both because of a higher state of political barbarism and because of greater relative numbers. Table VI. in the Appendix shows in round numbers the state of things in 1875. At all the ages above 29, the foreigners are vastly more numerous. Of five persons above the age of 35 years whom

\* *Tenth Census*, vol. i. pp. 548, 549.

† See Appendix, Tables VI. and VII., for figures on this subject.

we might meet hap-hazard on the streets in 1875, the chances were that four were born abroad. That the leaven of the American system of government working in this mass can keep the body politic from decay is a most striking proof of the power of an intelligent minority and of free institutions.

In the cities, as in other parts of the country, the proportion of foreign born persons must very soon decrease. The stream of immigration in the fifties added  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. yearly to our numbers. At present, though still great in volume, it adds less than 1 per cent. It is probable that New York will never again have such a large proportion of foreigners. But here, again, it is the children of foreigners who are next to assume control, and their children who will maintain it. A precise statement as to the number of native persons in New York City one at least of whose parents was a foreigner cannot be obtained. It is probably not far from half. New York, then, in 1880, must have had 70 per cent. to 80 per cent. of foreigners and children of foreigners. The wealth and greatness of the city distinctly show that energy and skill are not confined to the native elements. The real question seems to be how far the sons of foreigners will become Americans, how far they will adopt the language, habits, interests, political aptitudes, which are presumed in the citizens of a free republic. In New York some elements, as the Italian, show a troublesome tendency to form colonies, in which even the language remains foreign. In 1880, the Irish numbered 200,000. The German, Scandinavian, and English elements were about 220,000. There seems reason to hope that the last group, at least, will speedily be absorbed, and that their children will be Americans, and nothing else.

Inspection of the tables showing the status of Boston and New York brings out a very remarkable phenomenon. As in many parts of the East, the women decidedly outnumber the men; but this excess is due almost entirely to

foreigners. In Boston, the native males are 127,500, and the native females are 130,500. The foreign born males are 59,000, and the foreign females are 73,600. Or, to put it into more popular form, two American girls out of a hundred could find no American husband; but thirteen foreign born girls out of a hundred could find no mate among foreign born men. Not only is this excess peculiar to the foreign element, but it is especially noticeable in the ages from 15 to 29. In New York, the surplus of foreign born women over men between those ages alone was 17,000. The only plausible explanation is that large numbers of foreigners come into the cities to enter domestic service. Others, perhaps, find more employment for the poorly paid labor of women than is possible in smaller places. A still more unaccountable complication in New York is the excess by 5,000 of native girls of 15 to 19 over boys of the same age. It is not possible from the statistics to learn whether this is caused by an exodus of young men or by the crowding into the city of American girls.

The questions both of age and of sex have a serious bearing on the welfare of cities. At present, the great cities have an abnormal proportion of adults. During the next forty years, the proportion of children will steadily increase. Schools already crowded, and systems of education which ought to be outgrown, will become even more inadequate. The great problem how to deal with homeless children will be still greater. The excess of foreign born women will have an important bearing on the new question of woman suffrage. The effect of that change, if carried to its full and logical extent, must inevitably be still further to increase the foreign vote.

Allusion has already been made to the political effect of the colored population of Southern cities. The social effect is even more marked. There is, of course, no prospect that the dark race will be absorbed; and the problem is therefore a permanent one. Even in cities like

New York or Boston, in which not one person in sixty is colored, distinct colored quarters have been formed and will be continued. In the Southern cities, the maintenance of separate schools tends to prevent that harmony of feeling between the races which is the essential of stable society.

We may now summarize briefly the conclusions reached in this study of the conditions of city planting and city growth in the United States:—

The situation of cities depends chiefly on natural causes; but, once planted, the larger places have power to profit by artificial stimuli, such as immigration and railroads.

The great cities of the future must grow up out of present cities, large or small. There will be no more surprises, except, perhaps, in the Puget Sound region.

The tendency of systematized transportation is to cause the large cities to gain faster than small ones.

The tendency of modern life is to cause the cities to gain on the general population.

Since no sufficient pains has been taken to provide for the future, crowding and its associated evils are likely to be more prevalent.

The government of the cities is likely to improve with experience and the education of the community.

Most foreign elements will eventually be absorbed; but the effects of their former existence will be seen in a type of character in cities different from that found in country regions.

The children of the present foreigners, and their descendants, will be the rulers of future cities; and the great unsolved problem is, What are they to be?

The hope of the cities is in the generation to come, and the best service that a reformer can render is to aid in putting right examples and right principles into the minds of the children.

ALBERT BUSHNELL HART.